

# *the Nation*

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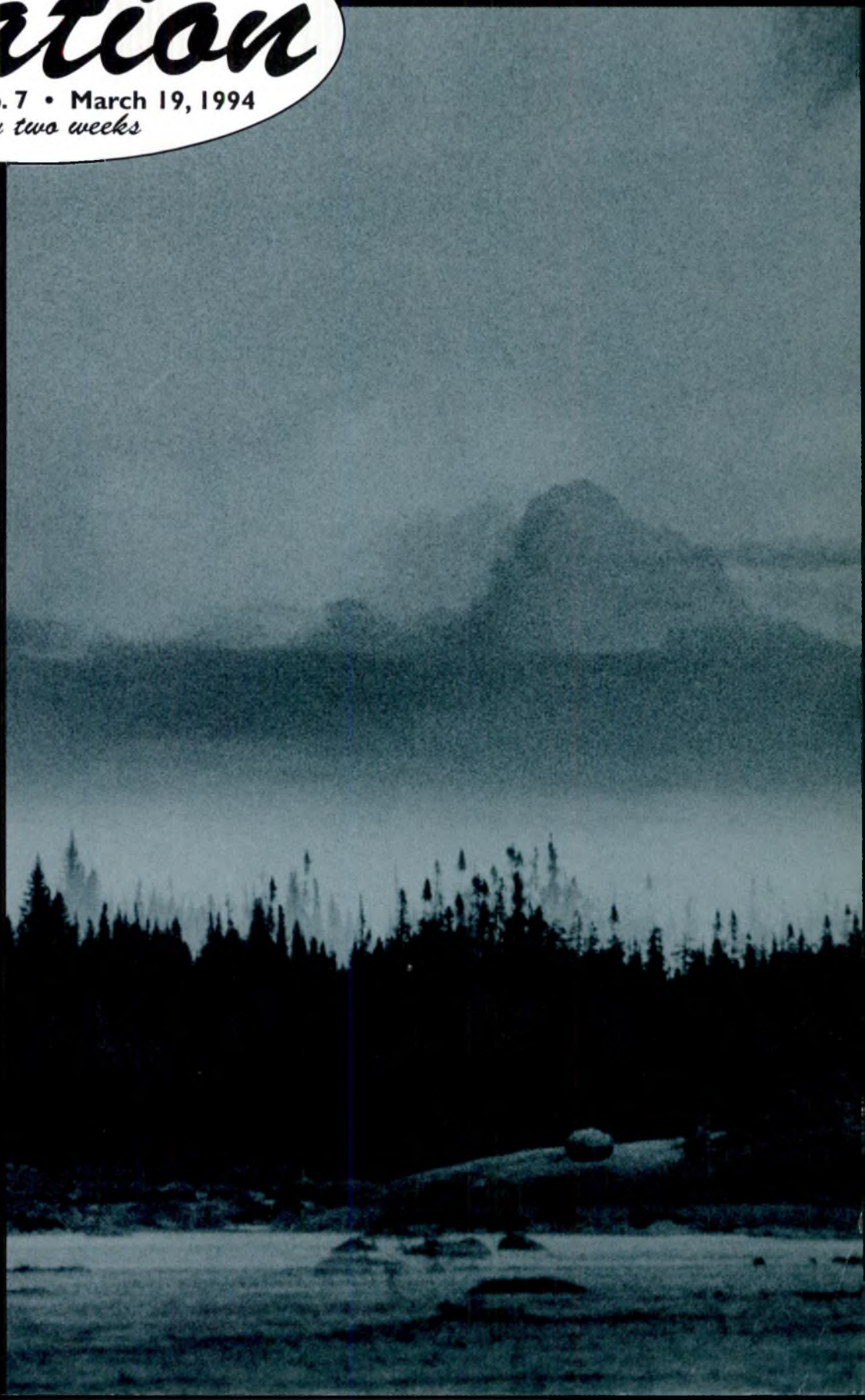
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## OUR LANGUAGE IS WHO WE ARE

Some young people might be confused about what being a Cree means. I know, because I've been there.

Growing up as a young man, I thought our Creeness was in name only. Seeing images on TV of Indians dancing, drumming and sometimes scalping, dressed in their feathers and paint, I thought that's what being Indian was all about. And because we didn't do that, I thought I wasn't "Indian" any more.

Sure, I spoke Cree, but I took that for granted. So I grew up with doubts in my mind about being "Cree." Especially with comments from other kids saying I wasn't Cree. But the one thing which sticks in my mind was my Grandfather who calls me "Wahmschtickoosh" (Whiteman—for those who don't know, I am a "half-breed"). I used to hate that.

Sometimes I held back yelling out to him that wasn't my name. But I granted him the respect by not yelling at him or anything, and just lived with it. Sometimes he would mockingly say, "Look at him, he's going to pick up the paper," or "he's picking up the pen." But I lived with it.

But then growing older and hopefully wiser, I started seeing the "Dominant" cultures in their uttermost and also others who have had

"contact" much longer than us. Then looking back to our culture, I slowly started realizing what we had back home.

Our language is a most wonderful gift. Besides the land, it's one of the most precious aspects of our culture. Our language is who we are. With it comes our "national character," with it come our names for all the plants, the animals and the special places within our "World." When we lose the language, with it also go the names, the animals, the places—our world. Look around you during a feast, a dance, a walking-out ceremony or when family and friends come over to gather and help mourn the loss of a loved one.

Ask yourself what it would be like without Cree concepts of the world. With the loss of the language, we lose concepts like "Kapatchipmatsee-an." The closest I can translate that is: "My life as it moves to the point in which I am now."

With one word in Cree you can visualize a life as a moving force to that point in which it is now.

My point is, don't lose the language. Getting back to my Grandfather, I am now proud to carry that name he gave me. Because it's special and it's mine. And

I am proud that I picked up the pen and paper.

BY ERNEST WEBB

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MARCH 19, 1994



## SOM - LA PRESSE SURVEY

Federal subsidies to the native peoples of Canada are \$5.8 billion per year. Do you think these subsidies should be...?

	Increased	Maintained	Reduced	Abolished	No Opinion
<b>TOTAL (no. 1,002)</b>	2%	20%	39%	29%	10%
<b>Mother tongue</b>					
French only (no. 854)	1%	15%	43%	34%	7%
English/Other (no. 145)	6%	43%	18%	10%	23%

Would you say that the quality of life of natives on reserves of Quebec is... compared to the rest of Quebecers?

	much better	a little better	the same	a little worse	much worse	no opinion
<b>TOTAL (no. 1,002)</b>	29%	19%	13%	19%	10%	10%
<b>Mother tongue</b>						
French only (no. 854)	33%	19%	14%	17%	9%	8%
English/Other (no. 145)	8%	18%	8%	29%	17%	20%

## OUR RIGHTS ARE OUR RIGHTS

Above we have reprinted the results of a poll that appeared in *La Presse* on Friday, March 12. The poll was conducted by SOM and commissioned by *La Presse* and Radio-Canada.

Let's be up front about this poll. I, personally, consider this poll to be both ethnocentric and ignorant. Not only does it show a dismal lack of education or concern about native culture but it is also a slap in the face to any aboriginal person, people, nation and indeed to our race as a whole.

Think about these questions and the people who were asked to answer them. Once again the native is being asked to bow to the wishes and desires of the "Great White Father," who will decide once again what is best for his Indian children. Are we once again to be left behind as not being capable enough to determine our own futures? Not one aboriginal response was included in this poll. Think about it.

Would not francophone Quebecois become understandably angry if only the Western provinces had a poll on whether or not to abolish the French language in Canada? What about a poll which just asked men if they think most women lie when they say they are raped?

Think of the anger in both cases. And you haven't even crossed the race line yet.

Well, this poll crosses racial and cultural lines. You are polling non-aboriginal people on questions concerning rights and obligations granted to the First Nations of this land. These rights and obligations are recognized by the society and laws by which Canada governs herself. In the Supreme Court of Canada, some of these rights and obligations are said to supercede the Constitution.

These are our rights as aboriginals. How can you think as a non-aboriginal person that you have the right to determine whether or not we have these rights? To do so is to deny the validity of your own laws, standards, ethics and the morals which you live by.

If *La Presse* and Radio-Canada had any good taste, they would apologize to the aboriginal peoples for the bad taste in their questions. It shows that *La Presse* and other newspapers in Quebec have not done their jobs. As media, isn't it our job to inform and educate on all aspects of Canadian life? For these attitudes to exist means that you have failed.

Only one good thing came out of this poll. It shows the ignorance of the Canadian people concerning aboriginal rights and living conditions. I think it may be time to add a native studies component to Quebec educational curriculums to address this problem. I also think newspapers such as *La Presse* have the moral and ethical responsibility to at least add a native section that talks about natives to help educate people so in the future these misunderstandings would hopefully be rare.

BY WILL NICHOLLS



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## SERVINOR RAPPED OVER FUNDS

Servinor has withdrawn \$8.5 million from a bank account managed by the Board of Compensation without getting permission from the board.

The move has prompted calls for stricter controls on how the Board of Compensation manages its funds. Servinor also raised eyebrows because it spent much of the \$8.5 million on a costly new warehouse which has already run into financial difficulties.

"You can't just write yourself a cheque," said Bill Namagoose, one of three CRA representatives on the Board of Compensation. "The system will be reviewed. There should have been more control and a cap on how much is withdrawn. Eight or nine million dollars is a little excessive."

Richard Brouillard, controller of the Board of Compensation and the man responsible for approving Servinor's cash withdrawals, agreed. "I am totally in favour of getting some system in that says permission will have to be requested beyond a certain level."

The \$8.5 million was withdrawn under the Board of Compensation's cash-management system. Under the system, Cree economic-development companies pool money in a joint bank account. When one of the companies has temporary cash-flow problems, it can borrow money from this account instead of going to the bank for a loan. The idea is to reduce how much Cree companies pay to the bank in interest charges by giving less profitable companies access to the resources of the more profitable ones.

The Board of Compensation is the body that administers \$130 million in heritage funds granted

to Crees under the James Bay Agreement.

But the system was designed for temporary withdrawals of several hundred thousand dollars, not \$8.5 million. That sum represents about half of Servinor's total revenues for all of last year.

Servinor's controller, Marcel Lefebvre, wouldn't comment on the controversy, beyond saying that the company followed "normal procedure." Marcel Lacroix, the company's director-general, is currently on vacation and could not be reached.

Namagoose said controls will be implemented on how much can be withdrawn at the next meeting of the Board of Compensation in Val d'Or, which starts March 22. He said Servinor is currently negotiating a \$7-million bank loan and will have to repay the Board of Compensation as soon as that loan is finalized. He said he didn't know whether Servinor has been told not to withdraw any more money.

Brouillard said the cash-management system is worth keeping and has saved Cree companies hundreds of thousands of dollars in interest charges. "I don't think the cash-management system should be scrapped. I think this would be a case of throwing the baby out with the bathwater."

He acknowledged that Servinor's new 67,000-sq-ft warehouse in Val d'Or, which cost \$4.6 million, isn't turning out to be the investment the company had hoped for. The warehouse, now a year old, was built on the assumption that Servinor would become the main food supplier to Cree merchants and to construction crews working on the proposed Great Whale River project. Both markets haven't taken off.

BY ALEX ROSLIN

## SPORTS GETTING TOO COMPETITIVE, SAY YOUTH

BY NATION STAFF

Over-competitiveness at sports matches is getting out of hand and is hurting relations between Crees, say Cree youth.

"There's an overemphasis on competition," said James Shecapio, president of the Cree Youth Council.

"It's one thing to win, but the important thing in the cultural tradition of the Crees is for everyone to come out as a winner, feeling good about themselves and remembering each other in a good way."

The youth council discussed the problem at its quarterly meeting at the beginning of March, held in Waskaganish. Several youth representatives worried that athletes and fans are becoming less civil toward each other at sports matches.

They were particularly concerned about the upcoming Quebec Aboriginal Minor Hockey and Boomball Tournament in Val d'Or, which started March 10.

The competitiveness has led to exchanges of hostile comments and even fist-fights, said Shecapio.

"We're not trying to put down the tournament. We're trying to enhance it by trying to promote the importance of respect and unity at events like this. These young people will eventually become our leaders. People should not go home feeling like losers," Shecapio said.

He said the competitiveness and violence are promoted by the media and educational system. "If this gets worse, it could affect the future of our people."

Shecapio said Cree athletes and leaders should come up with ways to foster cooperation and unity instead of competition.

One possible way, he said, is to create all-Cree sports teams with players from every community to compete in Quebec-wide sports leagues or against other First Nations.

"We should give a message to Crees that they can all be teammates regardless of their community."

—Nation staff



*The Nation* welcomes letters to the editor, comment pieces and other submissions from our readers. We strive to reflect all opinions in our pages.

## Asking for respect

### Letter to the editor:

Open letter to Gloria Hughboy,

In response to the recent letter addressed to *The Nation* entitled, "Dirty racial tactics," I would like to share some of my thoughts with you on this important issue, and maybe, bring a new parallel to it.

I am an individual, "so-called White," and my destiny brought me to the Island of Fort George in the summer of 1980, and I have been sharing and walking ever since towards the pathway of life with a man, citizen of the world, who happened to be born somewhere in the beautiful wilderness of James Bay, Quebec, who also happened to have a different colour of skin than mine, who is rich of a beautiful history to tell, cherishes strong beliefs of his own, customs and traditions... and most of all, has chosen to walk with me... someone from a different culture, with different customs, traditions, education and colour of skin... but "our hearts and feelings are of the same language."

When we chose to settle here in Chisasibi and decided to raise our children in their "Father's tongue" (Cree), we did not need anybody's advice on this; when we decided to share our lives together, we did not ask for anybody's approval on it either. We believed in each other... so for us, the world would agree!

I understand how you feel about discrimination, since I also have experienced racial and discriminating comments about living here in Chisasibi; and this, from both sides, Crees and Whites. Now, I do respect people's opinion, and I am also aware that racism exists everywhere in the world. And at times, you have to adopt a very tolerant attitude towards very narrow-minded individuals, walking towards very narrow pathways! And you often have to stand up for your rights.

Now, I do respect myself, I know what my beliefs are, where my roots come from, I am proud to be a White woman, and consider myself very fortunate to have been given the gift of

bringing to life two healthy children who can be proud of growing strong from two different... and beautiful cultures.

Now, my husband and I are not asking for approval of our relationship, neither for anybody's consent to raise our children on Cree land. All we are asking for is respect! Respect for the choices we make, as individuals trying to make the best of their lives, for them-

selves... to have the right to be happy, so we can share our happiness with others... anywhere in the world.

Like the Indian saying goes:  
"Don't walk in front of me, I might not follow;  
Don't walk behind me, I might not lead;  
Walk beside me, and be my friend."

Dolores Audet-Washipabano  
Chisasibi



## THE BUCK STOPS WHERE?

by *Francois Tanguay*

Hydro-Quebec has lost another export contract to the U.S. This time it was an 800-megawatt deal that was up for renewal. It would have extended well into the next century.

David Freeman, the new head of the New York Power Authority, announced on March 2 that he was recommending the cancellation of the deal. New England and Quebec are awash in energy. "Why commit ourselves to an energy deal when we might not need this energy for 15 years?" he asked.

Greenpeace's position is very similar. At hearings in New York, we argued that since there is an energy glut and since we have just seen the tip of the iceberg as far as energy efficiency is concerned, it would be ludicrous to pour any more cement "up North" or to build gas-burning plants near the cities.

We further argued that bad planning by Hydro has led to what they now call surpluses, but that are in fact losses. All these so-called surpluses are sold off at bargain prices to major industrial customers at the expense of other ratepayers. The aluminum industry alone got rate reductions of over \$235 million last year.

Just how much energy will we need to keep up with our greedy demand? The argument that mega-projects are needed to create jobs has run out of steam. The last dam that was given the go-ahead, the Ste-Marguerite-3 project, will create only 4,500 jobs over the 10 years of the construction. At the same time, Hydro's energy-efficiency program, which will cost exactly the same amount over the next decade, will create 38,000 jobs, according to the utility's own numbers.

We concluded our presentation with this note: If you buy the electricity, we will be saddled with the debt, the dams, the buried lands, the angry natives, not to mention the frustrated taxpayers. You are not buying a commodity. You are purchasing your way into our social problems.

At this point, what is lacking is an open-hearted debate, a democratic forum in which we can freely discuss our options and in the end come to some political and social decisions that would lead all to believe in a better future for all.

*Francois Tanguay heads the energy campaign of Greenpeace Quebec.*





## INDIAN AFFAIRS DEPT. ON THE WAY OUT

After years of complaints about the colonialist mentality of Indian Affairs, it looks like the hated federal department is on the way out. The problem is no one knows what will replace it.

The first reaction of aboriginal leaders has been very positive. "What we're talking about here is a major shift in jurisdiction," said Grand Chief Phil Fontaine of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs. "We're talking about making laws and enforcing laws," he said in one news report. "There are all kinds of strings attached to the money we receive. That's not acceptable."

The transfer of power will begin in Manitoba, where 61 First Nations already administer 80 per cent of federal programs for aboriginal peoples. Details are still sketchy and many newspapers have so far only carried short newsbriefs on the important development.

Indian Affairs Minister Ron Irwin said some of the department's functions won't be dismantled for a long time, particularly the land-claims section. "Claims will probably be the last thing to go," Irwin said in one report. Chief Fontaine said that under the deal Ottawa will still have to protect treaties with First Nations, resolve outstanding land claims and maintain its fiduciary relationship with First Nations.

The Assembly of First Nations responded to Irwin's

surprise announcement positively, praising the deal as being "on the cutting edge of the self-government process."

The Grand Council of the Crees was also highly favourable. "I'm really glad to see a proposal to do away with Indian Affairs," said Brian Craik, the Grand Council's federal-relations director. "It's the most positive development in years."

But Craik said questions remain about specifics. The deal could in fact be yet another federal attempt to shed its treaty obligations to First Nations, he said. First Nations are also still unsure of having access to enough money to make self-government work. Connected to this question is uncertainty over how much control First Nations will have over resources on their lands. "There has to be an understanding on resources," Craik said. "Without that, it's unacceptable."

The deal will have repercussions in Quebec, but exactly what those will be is unclear. "If it's a bad deal, there will be a lot of smiling faces in Quebec," he said, adding that Quebec could come off looking like the good guy by comparison. "But if the deal is to turn around the relationship between Canada and the First Nations, there will also have to be a re-examination of policies by Quebec, which so far has been blind to aboriginal peoples."

BY ALEX ROSLIN

## INUIT ELDERS HELP OFFENDERS

The Inuit of Iqaluit are experimenting with a new way of dealing with young offenders. Instead of having to serve a term in custody with questionable results, some young male offenders are being taught traditional Inuit ways by two elders and their families in an outpost camp 100 km southeast of Iqaluit.

The elders set up the camp last September after several years of lobbying for the chance to help wayward kids by imparting their knowledge of the land. The elders do not dwell on the past crimes of the boys, says a report about the program in *Nunatsiag News*, an Iqaluit-based newspaper. The boys are treated with respect and as equals.

The camp hasn't had any incidents of violence, the report said. Unlike in custody, the camp's residents do not have a repetitive daily routine. But they are busy all the time with daily chores.

The camp has room for six young offenders and security is minimal. The elders want to open the camp to young women and non-Inuit.

—Nation staff

## REOPEN CONTRACTS: COON COME

Quebec should reopen its costly secret risk-sharing contracts with aluminum multinationals, says Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come.

The contracts will end up costing Hydro-Quebec ratepayers \$10.2 billion, according to a new study by an Oregon-based energy consultant. "If Premier Johnson can have legislation adopted to unilaterally reopen the labour contracts of Quebec, he can certainly adopt legislation to stop these huge losses under the risk and profit-sharing program," said Coon Come.

The contracts commit Hydro-Quebec to providing over 3,600 megawatts of electricity to 13 large industrial companies—15 per cent more than the entire Great Whale River project would generate.

"Now that the export market has dried up and that the risk and 'profit'-sharing program is in question, the so-called 'need' for the Great Whale River project can no longer be seriously argued," said the Grand Chief.

The contracts allow aluminum producers to pay less for Hydro's electric-

BRIEFS CONTINUED ON PAGE 8



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ity if the price of the metal falls. The contracts were signed based on the argument that the aluminum smelters would create jobs. But according to the new study, which was commissioned by the Grand Council, the risk-sharing contracts will create only 8,400 jobs over their life—at a cost of \$1.2 million per job.

Since 1988, the price of aluminum has fallen by half due to the recession and Russia's flooding of the market with surplus aluminum. The falling price means aluminum producers now pay only 1.81 cents per kilowatt-hour of electricity. Hydro-Quebec spends 2.97 cents to produce and deliver each kilowatt-hour of electricity.

Officials from major aluminum-producing nations met in Ottawa late last month to discuss the troubled industry and agreed to cut world-wide output by 25 per cent. But the cuts are unlikely to affect aluminum production in Quebec. In fact, Hydro-Quebec's risk-sharing contracts make it profitable for the aluminum producers to keep their

smelters in Quebec going full-blast, even as they cut production elsewhere in the world.

—Alex Roslin

### NEW YORK CONTRACT CANCELLED?

The new chairman of the New York Power Authority has dealt a major blow to Hydro-Quebec when he recommended the cancellation of the utility's estimated \$5-billion (U.S.) electricity contract with Quebec. The move gives more breathing room to Crees concerned about construction of the proposed Great Whale River project.

The 20-year contract to acquire 800 megawatts of power from Hydro-Quebec was signed in 1990, and the supply of power was to begin in 1999. David Freeman, the new chair of NYPA, said New York is "awash" with energy due to the recession, energy-conservation measures and increasing supply from independent producers.

The proposed cancellation would be the second contract Hydro-Quebec has

lost with New York in two years. In 1992, NYPA cancelled a \$17-billion contract following price disagreements and protest against destruction of Cree lands.

Hydro-Quebec downplayed Freeman's statements, saying talks are still on track for a new contract for 1.5-billion kilowatt-hours of surplus power from Quebec. That represents half the power in the soon-to-be-cancelled contract. By restricting purchases to surplus power, New York power authorities hope they won't be accused of financing the Great Whale project.

But the Grand Council of the Crees is jubilant over the NYPA chair's statements. "I think Hydro-Quebec is reeling from this one," said Brian Craik, the Grand Council's federal-relations director. "Hydro-Quebec did not expect the New York Governor to appoint someone as progressive as Mr. Freeman, who has a history of restructuring utilities. Freeman is openly critical of Hydro-Quebec's manner of development, under which costs are passed on to the ratepayers and taxpayers, and they build

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not what consumers need, but what special interests demand," Craik said.

He added that energy policy is undergoing major rethinking in the U.S. and that Quebec is not immune. "Quebec cannot maintain a fortress mentality forever. They've got to get off the bigger-is-better mentality."

—Alex Roslin

## INQUIRY INTO RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

The Assembly of First Nations is launching an inquiry into the residential school system and intends to seek reparations for what Ovide Mercredi called "violations of human rights."

The schools, founded by religious orders, forced First Nations children to abandon their traditions, languages and religions, and were frequently the sites of sexual and physical abuse. They opened at the end of the last century and closed in the 1960s.

"Still today, we can see the perverse effects: numerous dysfunctional native families, the loss of traditions and culture, and alarming rates of suicide and violent death on reserves," Mercredi told reporters.

—Nation staff

## NATIVE REBELS OPTIMISTIC

The Mexican government has agreed to make sweeping economic and political reforms after talks with aboriginal rebels who launched an uprising in January. Leaders of the rebel Zapatista National Liberal Army were cautious about the accord but expressed guarded optimism. "We now have the obligation to reflect well on what their words say," said one Zapatista leader.

The 32-point agreement reads as an admission of the failures of the so-called modernization program of Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari. Under one provision of the accord, the government agreed to carefully study the impact of the North American Free Trade Agreement on the southern Mexican state of Chiapas, where the rebellion started. The accord promises job retraining to those hurt by free trade, as well as investment in new industries and protection from tougher foreign competition. The accord could also lead to new laws to assure impartial elections.



The accord must still be approved by a special session of the Mexican Congress and by peasants in the Mayan communities that supported the rebels. Conservative ranchers and political leaders in Chiapas are furious and have reportedly let loose death squads to kill peasant leaders.

—Nation staff

## TUFTS SELLS HYDRO BONDS

Tufts University of Massachusetts has decided to sell its investments in Hydro-Quebec bonds to protest against the proposed Great Whale River Project. At a closed-door meeting in late February, the university administration decided to sell investments of \$2 million because of the Great Whale project's "potential negative and irreversible impact on the environment and the native people living in the region."

Tufts is the second U.S. college to take such action, following in the footsteps of New Hampshire's Dartmouth College, which sold its Hydro bonds in December 1992. Hydro spokesman Guy Versailles downplayed the decision in an article in *La Presse*, saying that \$2 million isn't very much money. "It shows that people are vulnerable to the kind

of manipulation we have seen on the campus of this university," he said.

—Nation staff

## NATIVES BETTER OFF, BELIEVE FRANCOPHONES

Three-quarters of francophone Quebecers believe that federal grants to First Nations peoples should be either reduced or eliminated altogether, according to a poll conducted by *La Presse* and Radio-Quebec in early March. Among anglophones, only 28 per cent believe the funding should be cut.

Also, 52 per cent of francophones say the quality of life in First Nations communities is "much better" or "a little better" than elsewhere in Quebec. Only 26 per cent of anglophone Quebecers believe the same thing.

In reality, according to Statistics Canada, 34 per cent of on-reserve First Nations families live in poverty versus 18 per cent of the general population; death by suicide is 2.4 times more common among aboriginal peoples; and the average income for First Nations peoples was \$9,900 in 1985, half the Canadian average.

—Nation staff



# It's OUR RIGHT TO DECIDE



BY ERNEST WEBB

Crees don't have to sit and watch if Quebec decides to separate from Canada. Separation may lead to big social disruptions, but it's also a tremendous opportunity for Crees to redefine their relationship with Quebec, Canada and with each other.

Crees have several options before them, each with its own merits and pitfalls. We can stay with Quebec, leave and join Canada, or strike out on our own and start building the world's first aboriginal-ruled country.

Whichever option turns out to be the best, it's the Crees' right to decide and no one else's. That's the point which the Grand Council of the Crees is making as the possibility looms that Canada may break up.

In a recent speech in Germany, Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come told prominent academics that if Quebec separates, the Cree people will not be handed over from Canada to Quebec as if they were a piece of property.

"It is we who will determine our relationship with Canada, Quebec or both," said Coon Come. "We do not seek to prevent the Quebecois from achieving their legitimate goals. But we will not permit them to do so on Cree territory and at the expense of our fundamental rights, including our right to self-determination."

Cree leaders believe that if anyone has the right to self-determination, it's the First Peoples. "Matthew was not saying Quebec doesn't have the right to self-determination, just that Quebec's rights are not greater than the Crees' right," said Bill Namagoose, the Grand Council's executive director. "Quebec can't split and say, 'We'll decide afterwards what rights natives have.'"

The Grand Council doesn't believe it's realistic for Crees to go it alone and completely separate from Canada and Quebec. But what is realistic is for Crees to gain recognition of their jurisdiction over the territory they have occupied for at least 5,000 years.

"If the Crees keep after it they will get it," Namagoose said. "But are the Crees resolved to get it? I believe if they want it they will have it. It's just a question of how long and how hard they can fight for it."

The present system, where Quebec exploits and controls the territory and the Crees receive assistance from the federal and provincial government, doesn't work, said Namagoose. "In the long run, the costs incurred by the Crees in services, etc at some point have to come out of the territory. The majority of these costs have to be tied to how the territory will be developed," he said. "By the year 2020, the Crees will be over 25,000 people and growing. The Crees' interests over the long term will be best served by having

jurisdiction over their own land."

The Grand Council is set to begin talks with the federal government about relations with Canada should Quebec separate. As yet, no talks have started with the Parti Quebecois or the Quebec Liberals.

Currently, a Parti Quebecois spokesperson promises that if the PQ is elected, the Crees might get royalties from any developments in northern Quebec. However, Namagoose says the PQ has to realize it's not just a question of money but how the resources are managed. "That's like saying Quebec can continue to clear-cut land and build mega-projects as long as Crees get their two per cent of profits. This is unacceptable."

The PQ also says the Crees have the right to self-determination, but this right is as a minority within the Quebec population. PQ policy as it stands now is that the Quebec people have the right to determine their own political status, taking the native peoples with them, and to determine native rights sometime in the future.

Prominent separatists have talked about a municipal-type of self-government for native peoples (which the Crees already have), but not about meaningful control over their traditional lands and the resources in them, according to the Grand Council.

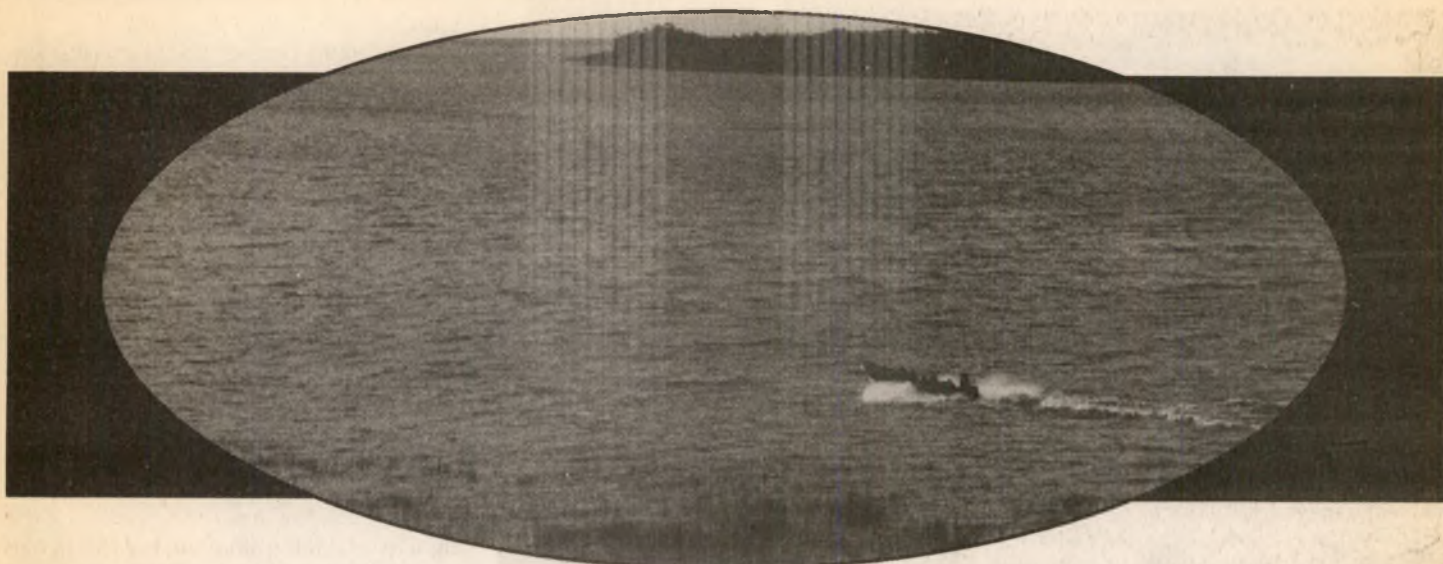
"If governments want to deal with the meaning of aboriginal rights, then that can be determined in the context of the recognition that Crees are the rightful owners of the resources of their traditional lands and waters and the resources in them," said Namagoose.

He said Cree society would become more democratic if Crees have control over their own destiny and the future of the territory. "For example, if the Crees were the ones to determine if a project went ahead or not, then the discussions would be much more internal to Cree society. There would not be information held back the way it is now, there would not be the distrust. The people would be more in control."

Today, those Crees who prefer to have dams built have no control over how they are designed, and how the Crees will benefit, he said. If Crees were in control, there would be concrete ways of accomplishing job development and training for projects. French would no longer be a problem and, most importantly, the effects of a project on the environment and animals could be properly considered by Cree experts.



# QUEBEC DENIES OUR RIGHTS: AFN



## *Quebec and Canada must recognize aboriginal rights, including the right to self-determination, says the Assembly of First Nations*

When we began looking at the issue of separation and options of sovereignty for the First Nations of Quebec, we called a number of people.

Ghislain Picard, vice-chief of the Assembly of First Nations, felt the issue has to be examined by each individual First Nation. A solution for the Mohawks would not necessarily be the same one for the Cree.

So we called Arnold Goodleaf, who is the external relations director of the Mohawk Council of Kahnawake, and asked him if the Mohawks have a policy on Quebec separation. "They can separate with what they came with," he replied. He said that was his sarcastic position.

But for a more formal policy, Goodleaf referred us to the resolutions passed by the AFN at their assemblies. Goodleaf also added that Quebec doesn't have all the elements for nation status in terms of recognition from the international community. "There is contested land," he said.

The AFN submission to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Affairs was a little more tactful. "Present issues of contention between First Nations in Quebec are often due to an unwillingness within the province to recognize the historical and legal foundation of our rights. Finally the aspirations of First Nations must be looked at in the light of the possibility of an accession to the sovereignty of Quebec."

Another AFN resolution on Quebec sovereignty was passed by the chiefs in Calgary in July of 1993. The chiefs said Quebec separatism has "negatively affected relations between the First Nations and the province of Quebec." But they didn't spare Ottawa from their criticism, going on to say that the "federal government has not undertaken its proper responsibilities to the First Nations of Quebec."

The AFN's resolution also contains the following recommendations:

- The government of Quebec must acknowledge that it cannot unilaterally maintain or suspend or in any way modify the status of

treaties, including treaties to which it is a party.

- The fiduciary duty of the federal government has its roots in the aboriginal title of the First Nations of Canada. These fiduciary obligations are owed principally although not exclusively by the federal government. As a consequence, the government of Canada must protect the interest of the First Nations of Quebec. one way of doing so would be the unanimous entrenchment of the inherent right to self-government of First Nations in the constitution.

- The federal government must give the First Nations of Quebec full assurances that as part of its fiduciary duty, it will ensure that the First Nations of Quebec are given the opportunity to exercise their right to self-determination regardless of Quebec's political, legal and constitutional status.

- The government of Quebec must acknowledge the existence of an ongoing treaty process and commit itself to this process for the future. The James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement is a contemporary example of an ongoing treaty relationship between First Nations and the Crown. The treaty process is a preferred model for the relationship between the Crown and First Nations.

- The government of Quebec must review its position on the existence of aboriginal rights and publicly acknowledge that such rights exist everywhere in the province. The aboriginal rights, including title and jurisdiction, of First Nations of Quebec do not depend upon recognition by the province for their existence. These rights are original rights, now constitutionally protected, which are held by First Nations. Nevertheless, a positive and harmonious relationship between the government of Quebec and First Nations in the province can't be achieved unless the government of Quebec acknowledges the existence of aboriginal rights. This acknowledgement must be confirmed in both the political sphere and in arguments presented by the government of Quebec in the courts.

- The province must acknowledge the legal and historical foundation of First Nations rights in the province.

—Ernest Webb and Will Nicholls



# PQ OFFERS NATIVES NEW DEAL

BY ALEX ROSLIN

Jacques Parizeau seems convinced he will be celebrating Quebec Independence Day on June 24, 1996, but he still hasn't figured out how to deal with the biggest obstacle in his path: the First Peoples of this land.

The Parti Quebecois has put a lot of energy into trying to convince Quebecers to vote "yes" to independence in a referendum. But winning the referendum will be a relatively easy task compared to convincing the 11 First Nations in Quebec to separate from Canada too.

That seemingly impossible task is the job of one man, David Cliche. Cliche, a well-known Quebec environmentalist, is the PQ's official liaison with the First Nations. He has spent the last few months trying to convince them of the merits of his proposals on aboriginal issues and sovereignty.

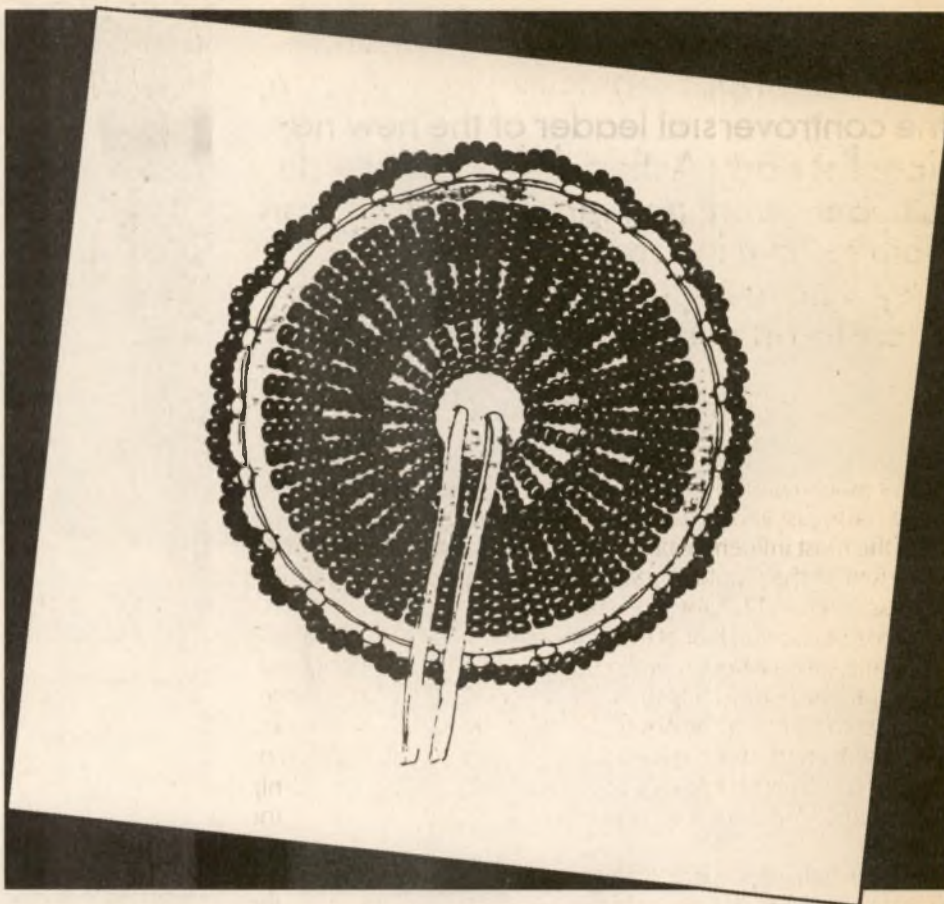
Cliche sees sovereignty as an opportunity to create social justice in Quebec and a "new social contract" with First Nations. "It's a way of improving the situation. I would not be a sovereigntist if I did not believe it would improve my situation socially, politically and economically," he said.

"The Indian Act is a colonialist approach. The basis of it is wrong. This is not the way natives will become partners and equal," said Cliche.

The PQ position is that First Nations have the right to self-determination, but with an important restriction. They cannot leave Quebec if Quebec separates from Canada.

In the event of separation, the PQ promises that Quebec will assume all federal treaty obligations and funding for the First Nations. As an example, take the Cree School Board. Today, 25 per cent of its funding comes from Quebec and the rest from Ottawa. A PQ government would assume 100 per cent of its funding after separation. "Quebec will assume all federal responsibilities. The minimum would be the status quo," said Cliche.

The PQ would also immediately enter into talks with each First Nation to redefine relations on a nation-to-nation basis. One possible arrangement being discussed with the Inuit is a form of "home rule" similar to the relationship between Greenland and Denmark, with substantial powers being transferred to an Inuit government, including some international authority. Royalties



would go to the Inuit from all development on this territory, including hydro-projects. But jurisdiction over resources would be shared between the Inuit and Quebec.

Cliche sees other changes, too. For the first time, aboriginal peoples on reserves would start paying income taxes—to their own governments. "The fact that Indians don't pay income tax to their own government for services they receive is a way to keep them from being responsible. That would be the first step," Cliche said, suggesting that aboriginal peoples may eventually be forced to pay income taxes to other levels of government.

As for the Great Whale River project, Cliche had some seemingly positive words. "Personally, I don't see a need for Great Whale for years and years, if ever," said Cliche, who also chairs the Great Whale Forum, a coalition of ecologists, unions and others opposing Great Whale.

He promised that, if elected, the PQ would create an independent commission which would conduct a public debate on Quebec's energy policy, something Crees

have wanted for years. "We would give priority to energy conservation and alternatives would be evaluated on the basis of integrated-resource planning, taking into account all social and environmental costs. We would also explore wind and solar power," he said.

It may sound interesting on paper, but Cliche hasn't actually managed to take his deal directly to Crees yet. He has told the Grand Council he is interested in starting talks, but the Cree leadership is interested in dealing directly with Parizeau, not his sidekick—no matter what Cliche promises, it's not clear it will be adopted as party policy. Cliche has also indicated that Parizeau is willing to meet with ordinary Crees in a public assembly in a Cree community.

The position of the Liberal Party of Quebec on all this remains unclear. It's also unclear what the Liberals themselves are offering the First Nations as they go into the upcoming elections. The Liberals also haven't met the Crees. *The Nation* repeatedly called the office of Native Affairs Minister Christos Sirros, but got no response.



# NATIONALIST LIKE ME

Quebec nationalists come in many different stripes. Some like Jean Allaire, the controversial leader of the new nationalist party Action démocratique du Québec, want immigrants to pledge an oath to "live in French." If they don't, they'll have to pay back the money spent to "integrate" them.

BY NATION STAFF

But other nationalists see sovereignty as a way of making Quebec a more just and equal society, not a more divided one. Perhaps the most influential progressive nationalist is Gérald Larose, president of the Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN), Quebec's second-largest union federation.

Larose is also co-chair of the Quebec-Native Forum, a coalition of organizations whose members account for half the population of the province, including the CSN, unions representing Quebec teachers and farmers, the Assembly of Bishops and the Mouvement Desjardins credit-union network. First Nations are represented by the Native Women's Association, Montreal's Native Friendship Centre and leaders of five First Nations in Quebec, including the Crees.

Larose helped prepare the forum's brief to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, which called for the recognition of the right to self-determination of the First Peoples. For Larose, that right isn't some vague concept. It means that should Quebec separate from Canada, aboriginal peoples have the right to stay in Quebec or leave.

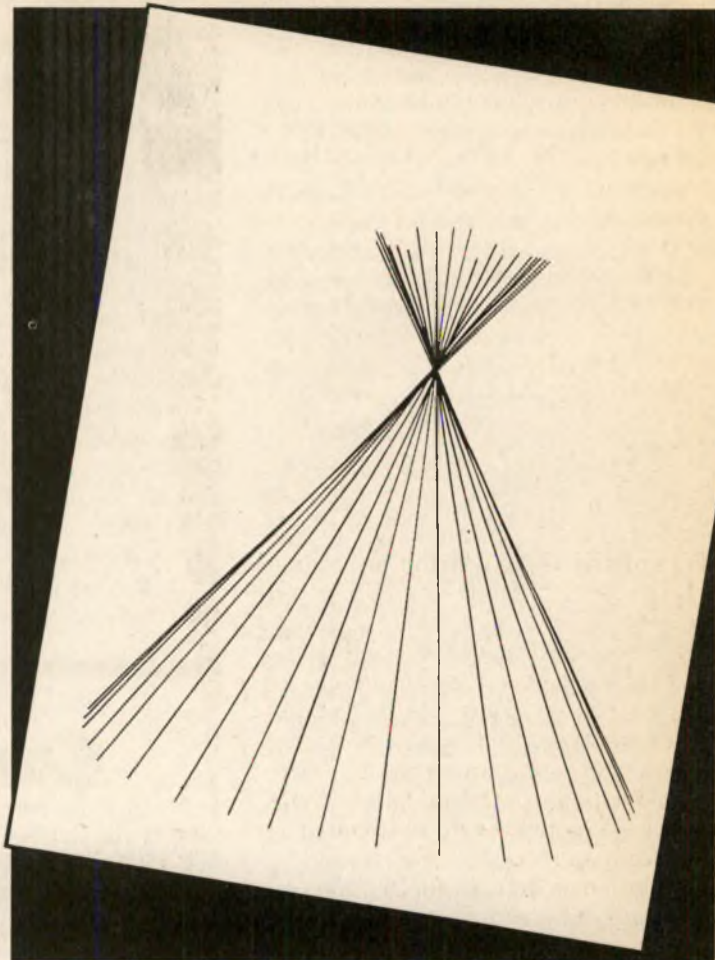
"Our view is that the colonial heritage should be abandoned through a process of sovereignty. The proposition of the Quebec-Native Forum is that in the process of Quebec achieving sovereignty, it should also be the occasion for the aboriginal nations to accede to their own sovereignty, to leave the federal stranglehold," said Larose.

"We are against the authoritarianism of the federal government. We are against the colonial heritage that aboriginal nations have experienced in Canada, I would say in a more dramatic way than the Quebec nation. What we would like is for the aboriginal nations to ally themselves with Quebec sovereignty to assume fully all the privileges and responsibilities that come with it."

Larose said in an interview that his union also opposes the Great Whale River project. "Considering the economic constraints, in our view there is no need. We don't think energy development requires the development of mega-projects like this one. Also, it requires negotiations with the aboriginal nations, which hasn't been done."

The union leader argued that Hydro-Quebec's development of the North should not be blamed on Quebec nationalism, but on "short-sighted capitalism."

"It comes from an old tradition of economic development," he



said. "It's short-sighted development based on the belief that natural riches can be exploited immediately without any consideration of sustainable development. It has nothing to do with nationalism. It has a lot to do with capitalism."

But when asked whether Crees are right to be wary of the Bloc Québécois and PQ, Larose was critical of some First Nations leaders. "I think there is among some aboriginal leaders a pollution created by federalists who promote fears among aboriginal peoples so that they become an instrument to derail the debate. I regret that," he said.

"When we speak frankly, clearly and honestly with aboriginal peoples, they understand very well that one can support Quebec's sovereignty and still have a sincere and firm will to support the economic and social betterment of aboriginal peoples."

But other Quebec separatists are less willing to trust the Bloc and PQ. One is François Saillant, a leading housing activist in Montreal and member of the Regroupement de solidarité avec les autochtones.

In a letter to *La Presse* on March 9, Saillant attacked Bloc leader Lucien Bouchard for launching a "hate campaign" against Mohawks over the cigarette-smuggling issue. Saillant took Bouchard to task for making "alarming accusations, insinuations and generalizations

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14



## ...NATIONALISM

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

against the Mohawk nation and all aboriginal peoples." The Bloc's campaign has "stigmatized an entire people and has dangerously boosted anti-native sentiments rooted in a large part of the Quebec population," Saillant wrote.

Saillant is a member of a coalition of grassroots groups lobbying for social housing, which presented a brief to the Bélanger-Campeau commission in 1990 calling for recognition of aboriginal peoples as nations "having the right to decide their own future." The brief also supported independence for Quebec because it said the province "suffers a position of inferiority and oppression in Canada." It cited statistics showing that poverty, illiteracy and poor housing are disproportionately present in Quebec compared to the rest of Canada.

Another influential Quebec grassroots activist, Marianne Roy, also said there is ample reason to be wary of the nationalist parties. Roy is the coordinator of Solidarité populaire Québec, a coalition of 110 major grassroots organizations and unions representing two million Quebecers. "Crees are right to be skeptical," she said.

Roy's group is working on a People's Charter for Quebec that supports Quebec sovereignty as a means of fighting poverty and inequality. The charter also supports the aboriginal right to self-determination and nation-to-nation talks with the First Nations.

Roy said she is still unsure herself whether she would vote "yes" in a referendum on Quebec sovereignty because she doesn't trust the Parti Québécois. But whatever the outcome, she believes more pressure is needed on the government from the grassroots to create social change. For change to happen, she said grassroots groups in Quebec and aboriginal peoples should work more closely together.

Roy herself is putting those words into action in her work as coordinator of the Kahnawake Human Rights Watch, a group formed by the Kahnawake band council, the CSN and church groups to monitor police harassment of Mohawks.

"More emphasis should be put on ties between organizations of the people to put pressure on governments to make sure that whatever comes out of this, it reflects the needs of aboriginal peoples and the people of Quebec," she said. "In order for change to happen on a political level, there has to be pressure from the grassroots."

# SHOULD WE STAY...

There is lots of talk about Quebec possibly separating from Canada. What isn't being talked about are the rights and options Crees have if Quebec separates.

The separatist Parti Québécois is the favoured winner in the next election, which could be held as early as June. A growing number of Quebecers seem convinced that Quebec will be an independent country within two years.

If Quebec splits from Canada, this will have a radical impact on Cree life. What happens to Cree people and Cree traditional lands? Quebec assumes the land will go with Quebec. Some Canadians think that Canada has a good claim.

But what do the Crees want? No one, particularly the Parti Québécois, wants to ask the Crees. If the Crees don't decide, someone else will decide for them.

In this issue of *The Nation*, we examined the positions of the Grand Council of the Crees, the Assembly of First Nations and Quebec nationalists. In our next issue, we will talk to Cree ambassador Ted Moses and the various political parties in Ottawa, and we will look at Cree rights from the perspective of international law.

If Quebec separates from Canada, Crees have three basic options: staying in Quebec, staying in Canada or going it alone.

To open up the discussion, we look at all three options below, and list the advantages and disadvantages of each one.

BY CATHERINE BAINBRIDGE

## STAYING IN QUEBEC

PQ leader Jacques Parizeau has yet to meet with Cree leaders to discuss sovereignty or the future of the First Nations in Quebec. Officially, the PQ recognizes the existence of the 11 First Nations in Quebec. But, the PQ has not officially recognized that aboriginal peoples have an equal right to self-determination if Quebec separates, including the right to leave Quebec.

### ADVANTAGES

- The James Bay Agreement would be null and void, and the Crees would be in a position to negotiate full control over the territory, including something like a territorial status.
- If Quebec would stop treating people who aren't "real" Quebecois as a threat, perhaps the Cree Nation and the Quebec people could support each other as threatened peoples and cultures.
- The PQ promises that if Quebec separates, all federal treaty obligations would be assumed by the government of Quebec. It also promises a public debate on energy policy and the party also says it opposes construction of the Great Whale River project.

### DISADVANTAGES

- Do you trust the Parti Québécois to deal fairly with native peoples and to keep their word?
- The PQ intends to separate with northern Quebec. The party states that it will take over the rights and obligations of the government of Canada, including final say over native peoples, the lands and resources. In this way, the PQ hopes to maintain the so-called "extinguishment" of Cree rights over their lands.
- Quebec will have a huge debt (in the hundreds of billions) if it separates. Will the Crees be willing to weather the economic storm in Quebec after separation? Quebec will be a poorer society for many years, if not forever. Will Quebec be able to afford obligations to Crees?
- Cree territory will be seen as a vast treasure house of natural resources to be exploited, especially if the new country of Quebec is in economic difficulty.
- Other native nations may not stay in Quebec. The Crees would be cut off from native peoples in the rest of Canada, including west-coast James Bay Crees.
- French is not as prevalent among Crees as a second language.
- The francophone press continually puts down First Nations peoples (never mind Oka!) and a recent poll in *La Presse* (see Editorial, page 4) revealed a strong racist attitude among francophone Quebecers toward native peoples.



# ... OR SHOULD WE GO NOW



## STAYING IN CANADA

If Quebec separates, Crees have a strong argument for remaining with Canada. Canada handed over Cree territory, known as Rupert's Land at the time, to the province of Quebec in 1898 and 1912. But this "gift" was made to the province of Quebec, not a separate country called Quebec.

Historically and under the law, native people have been the responsibility of the government of Canada, not the provinces.

### ADVANTAGES

- If Canada splits apart, the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement will be null and void, and could be rewritten—minus all the flaws. The Crees signed the James Bay Agreement with Canada and the province of Quebec, not an independent country called Quebec.
- Going with Canada opens up the opportunity for the Crees to redefine their sovereignty over the land, to negotiate for meaningful control over the territory and management of resources. Crees could redefine their relationship to Canada on the basis of true self-government.
- Canada has the obligation to defend Cree rights in the event of Quebec separating. If Crees go with Canada, the federal government would be obliged under the constitution to continue meeting its obligations in fields like education and housing.
- Canada's territorial governments (the NWT, Yukon and Nunavut) are good examples of the kind of arrangement that could be suitable to the Crees. Crees could have their own Territorial Assembly and similar powers to the Northwest Territories.
- English, the main language in the rest of Canada, is much more prevalent among Crees than French.
- The Crees would maintain their ties with other First Nations coast to coast.

### DISADVANTAGES

- Canada hasn't exactly been a generous and trusted protector of Cree interests. It was Canada that gave away Cree lands to Quebec without Cree knowledge or consent. Do you trust Canadian politicians to keep their word? During the talks over James Bay Phase I, the federal government assumed the stance of "alert neutrality," letting Quebec do what it wants.
- Quebec will be VERY angry if the Crees go with Canada. The territory is worth billions of dollars in forestry, hydroelectricity, mining and tourism. It is a huge portion of Quebec. Without it, Quebec will be a much smaller country. At the very best, there will be a backlash against native peoples in Quebec. Is Canada able and willing to protect the Crees in such a context.
- Will Canada sell the Crees out to Quebec? If Quebec separates, there will be tough negotiations with Canada on many issues, like the debt, access to the St-Lawrence Seaway, the status of federal assets in Quebec. The Crees may become a bargaining chip for Ottawa.
- The Inuit appear to be more favourable to staying in Quebec. If they did this, Crees would be boxed in from the north and south.
- Economic ties with Quebec businesses, provincial government agencies and non-Cree towns near the Cree territory would be disrupted. The situation of towns like Radisson within Cree territory would also cause problems.

## GOING IT ALONE

When Canada handed over Cree territory to Quebec in 1898 and 1912, it can be argued that this was both inappropriate and illegal. Crees have inhabited and cared for the land as long as anyone can remember. Morally, the Crees are the true people who should have sovereignty over the territory.

Crees have representation at the UN and can make just a strong case as Quebec, if not stronger, for becoming an independent country. The question is can the Crees carry it off?

### ADVANTAGES

- The Crees would have real control over our society, destiny and the development of the territory.
- The land would finally be cared for by the people whose lives are intertwined with it, not people who only want to profit from it.
- Crees could move away from dependence on outside governments and paternalism.
- Chance to recreate a Cree-style democratic society, with more open institutions.
- The Cree Nation would become the first native-run country on the planet—a model for other native nations. Crees would become the first indigenous people in almost 500 years to regain control of their destiny.
- Crees have the traditions of land use, democracy, expert knowledge of the territory and value system that would create a fair and healthy society, and preserve the land for all future generations.

- Crees could seek associations with Canada and/or Quebec.

### DISADVANTAGES

- Huge and immediate administrative challenge. The Crees would have to set up a state with all the institutions that go with it in a very short time.
- Can the Crees defend their borders from a hostile Canada or Quebec?
- Ending of funding for social services, housing, income security dependent on welfare payments from Canada and Quebec. Disrupted economic ties between Crees and non-Cree society.





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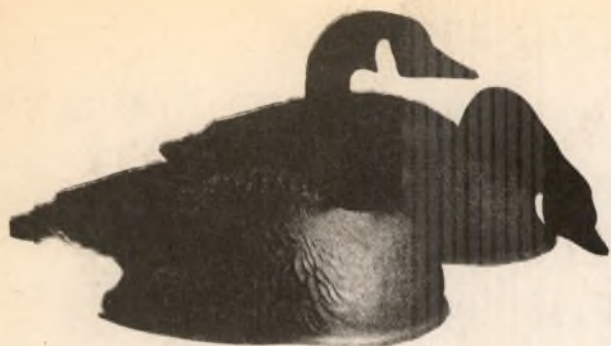
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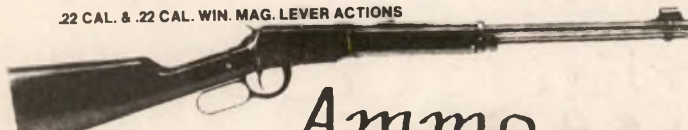


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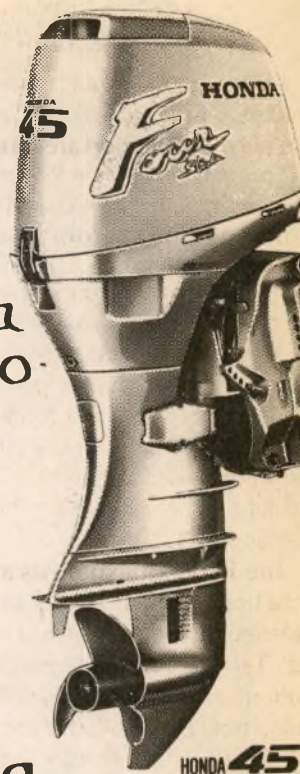




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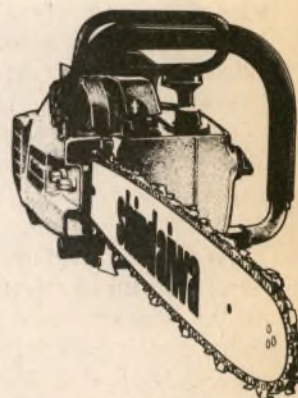
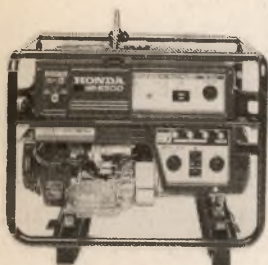
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# R-21 TRAPLINE: THE WOUNDED LAND

BY WILL NICHOLLS

Many people would be happy to have a road near the place where they live, work and play, but trappers are an exception.

Trappers on trapline R-21 are adversely affected by a new road called the Route du Nord running from Nemaska to Chibougamau.

Freddy Jolly is the tallyman of the R-21 trapline, which supports five families including his. R-21 has been a Jolly family trapline for thousands of years passed on from tallyman to tallyman according to traditional Cree custom. "Where are the words that our leaders use: 'Respect the land, respect the animals?'" Freddy asks. "We have shed tears for R-21."

The Route du Nord has affected nine Cree traplines. The fears that the trappers have expressed are already proving to be real. Two days before Freddy talked to *The Nation*, a Mistissini trapper had his skidoo stolen near the Route du Nord. This is also the first time that Freddy and other trappers have had to buy food from a store to feed their families. "The big game animals aren't there because of the construction," said Freddy, explaining why R-21 wasn't able to feed him and the other families as it had in the past.

The trappers know this road will allow access to non-Crees, who don't respect the tallyman or understand the bush. "Now, I'll have to use bright clothes so I don't get killed checking my rabbit snares," said Freddy.

"Other people I've talked to tell me about those other hunters. They shoot at any movement or sound. My children won't be safe."

Freddy expressed other fears about forestry, citing the clearcutting of traplines in the Waswanipi territory. The forestry industry has made a financial contribution toward the costs of the road, Freddy noted, saying that they have plans for the land.

The road itself has been responsible for the destruction of 24 hills on R-21. When Hydro-Quebec came through with its transmission lines, the utility consulted with Freddy on where to locate the route. But nobody consulted Freddy on the best route for the road.

Instead, he was told he would have to



leave the cabin where his father passed away three years before. He remembers his father saying, "As a hunter, our senses will be changed. We don't hear the sound of a beaver's tail slapping the water, a caribou passing by any more. All that we hear is the bulldozers."

To Freddy, the coming of the road means there will be more people on his land who do not respect the tallyman's wisdom in harvesting its resources. Incoming fishermen will disturb sensitive fish spawning grounds. It will bring hunters who kill whatever moves, forestry operations that clearcut without regard for the eco-system and eventually Hydro-Quebec trucks for the Eastmain projects at first, then NBR. Alcohol and drugs will enter in greater numbers killing his part of the culture.

This is Freddy's fight, one he fights day by day, knowing he must do everything in his power to save the land his father passed on to him, that he wants to pass on to his children in their time.

Freddy's love for the land is a real and tangible thing, able to touch another human being through a phone line.

*This is the first in an occasional series of articles called The wounded land about how the land and its caretakers have been affected by various development projects.*

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### Maamuitaau This Week

March 19/20

Abuse of elders is a disturbing social development that strikes to the roots of aboriginal culture. **Maamuitaau** looks at the extent of the problem in the Cree community and the reaction of elders and leaders.

March 16/27

Why doesn't the Le Grande River freeze in the winter? **Maamuitaau** interviews a Hydro Quebec environmental worker and visits a Cree hunting camp to explore traditional knowledge about changes in the weather.

See **Maamuitaau** at 8 a.m. Sundays on CBMT, at 6:45 Saturday and 18:00 Sunday on SRC and on CBC North and TVNC.

CBC  North



# MOCKERY OF JUSTICE FOR NATIVE PEOPLE

BY CHIEF H. MIANSUM

On May 16, 1992, Richard Shecapio, age 19, was shot and killed by a person under the influence of alcohol. The accused was arrested and then released from prison 10 days after this incident and placed in a half-way house in Amos, Quebec where he enjoyed freedom of movement in the town and the surrounding area.

He continued to have a normal life, including having a relationship with a girlfriend who became pregnant during this period of confinement. According to the judge, this is part of the life plan of having a family.

The rationale of this statement is difficult to comprehend. How can a person who recently took another person's life and subjected the victim's family to great anguish, sorrow and pain enjoy such freedom to plan a family while in custody? A person considered dangerous to society should be imprisoned until sentencing. This is the normal process in other instances, but not in this case.

After 21 months, on February 8, 1994, Judge Denis Lavergne, of the itinerant court which comes to Mistissini for a total of 10 days per year, finally rendered a decision on the killing which shocked, angered and insulted the people of Mistissini. The sentence for the charge of manslaughter was two years less a day.

Judge Lavergne's judgement was based on the psychological portrait of the accused by an expert witness and was not necessarily based on the crime itself.

There seemed to be no native "expert witnesses" to support the prosecution of the accused. The court obviously had a low regard of native expertise, perhaps because we do not have titles or abbreviations after our names. But we are no fools when it comes to observation and deducing elements of nature that reflect a situation.

We question the actual state of the accused who in his reported blackout situation from alcohol was able to recognize each constable on duty and call them by their respective names from a distance of 100 metres; how the accused coyed with the police officers at the site of the incident; how the accused calculated his walk/run on dangerous thin ice with water holes around the area where he went; how he skillfully tapped the ice for thickness for a safe route; how the defiant behaviour of



the accused during his trips to Mistissini for his hearings was observed. We also question his defense strategy of declaring that he couldn't remember any of the incident because of intoxication.

Judge Lavergne's decision makes a mockery of the judicial mechanism that was designed to protect the victims of crime. To the contrary, this system seems to protect the accused charged with a violent crime while under the influence of alcohol or other substances. In this case, justice protected the accused. Where is the justice for the victim and the innocent?

The judge stated that alcohol must not be an excuse to commit a crime. We agree with this statement. However, in the next breath the judge said the accused cannot be held responsible for crimes committed while under the influence of alcohol especially if the accused had a history of blackouts, family problems and drinking problems.

Less violent crimes involving native people charged in non-native towns have resulted in more severe sentences regardless of whether the accused has an alcohol problem or criminal record.

The court decision and sentencing seem to transmit the message that an accused native will not be severely sentenced if he

kills another native person while under the influence of alcohol and is deemed to have a history of alcohol abuse problems.

The decision represents a silent genocide against the native people through a non-native justice mechanism that protects native people who commit violent crimes against their own people. This is the dangerous part of this decision. The decision will harvest further violent crimes against native people. The anguish, sorrow and pain will continue for our people. Who is next to say, "I don't remember," when another death results.

Alcohol is a silent killer of our people which is often viewed quietly as an act beyond our control when death results from its abuse. We do not need another forum to promote alcohol as an excuse for these so-called accidental deaths to continue.

To further insult the people of Mistissini and more specifically the victim's family, Judge Lavergne viewed the court sentence as a reflection of the community's denunciation of the crime—both an indication and an assurance that a prison term will be imposed on those who commit a crime.

The hypocrisy of this statement fuels the resentment against the non-native judicial process of the governments of Canada and Quebec.



# CREES BID FOR MIDGET AA FRANCHISE

Young Cree hockey players may soon no longer have to go south and join non-Cree teams to play Midget AA hockey. Plans are underway for the first Cree Midget AA hockey franchise to be affiliated with the Abitibi Minor Hockey Association.

Organizers of the bid made their pitch to the president of the Midget AA league on March 9, and a final decision from the league is expected April 24. If Crees get the okay, a Cree squad could join the seven-team Abitibi league by next September.

Waswanipi resident Sam Gull, the bid's main organizer, is now looking for financial support from the Cree communities. The franchise will need about \$75,000 a year, with a slightly higher cost the first year due to start-up expenses.

Gull was enthusiastic about the benefits of the investment. The Abitibi league is highly competitive and well-regarded in minor hockey circles, and was the starting point for NHL stars like Eric Desjardins and André Racicot.

"The whole idea is to give youth a goal.

For a lot of youth, when they go to play down south, it's a culture shock. It's hard for them to adjust," he said. This has deprived many young Crees of a chance to go on to pro hockey, Gull added, despite abundant hockey talent in the Cree communities.

Currently, half a dozen Crees from the inland communities play for the Chibougamau Midget AA team, and are considered to be the team's stronger players. Gull said additional talent for the Cree team is available in the coastal communities, Moose Factory and even in nearby Attikamek and Algonquin communities.

Gull first proposed the idea two years ago but was still in school at the time and couldn't devote himself to it. "Now that I'm in the community, I decided to take on the project, especially with the talent we have to produce very high-calibre players who could even go professional."

A Cree Midget AA team could also encourage Cree youth to stay in school and allow parents to get involved, Gull said.



Some league games would be played in the Cree communities, bringing money back to Crees.

Gull hopes the Cree franchise bid will get a push from the March 10-13 Quebec Aboriginal Minor Hockey and Broomball Tournament in Val d'Or, a major showcase for First Nations hockey talent with 80 teams playing from across Quebec.

—Alex Roslin

A report on the tournament will appear in our next issue.

## COVER

# AN ELDER'S THOUGHTS ON QUEBEC AND CREE SEPARATION

The following is an interview between *The Nation's* Ernest Webb and Chisasibi elder Abraham Pisinaquan, 80, about Quebec and Cree sovereignty. Translated by Brian Webb.

**The Nation: Where do Eeyou come from?**

**Abraham Pisinaquan:** He wasn't in one place when he was found. Wherever Whiteman found land, there were native people. When the Whitepeople found this land, it was called Eeyou-schii. When the Whiteman showed the Eeyou gifts and offerings, the Eeyou said, "kabada" ("don't bring it"). The Eeyou didn't know what the use for these gifts was.

The Whiteman thought the Eeyou said "canada." The whiteman sailed back where he came from and said, "The name of that place where those Eeyou live is Canada."

**What do you tell Quebec, which wants to separate?**

It looks like they shouldn't do it. It is long ago that Trudeau was prime minister and he said, "I will give no one my ownership to that which is under my rule." He said it



because he did not want them to separate. It is not right what Quebec is trying to do. Quebec will be able to have complete rule over us once it separates. I am one of those people who don't agree with separation. What do you think?

**That is what I think too.**

Yes, many people think that. We don't want the old government to let go of us. For the Quebec government was only recently with us. The government in Ottawa was with us for a long time. Hopefully, the

old government will see that Quebec is very wrong. It will probably be not as helpful compared to the old government.

I think when Ottawa first governed here, they really were sensible and trustworthy. Today, the government and the band council do not move in the direction where the ancients were.

**If the Crees decide to go it alone, what will it be like?**

Is there anything which he [natives] can use to support it? If there isn't anything he can use, maybe it will be hard. If he is helped and sees it will help him, it will be alright.

During the trade when they took furs, you must have heard that they had to stack furs as high as a gun before they could get the gun. Imagine the price of that.

There were a lot of injustices to the native people in the past. That's the way he [natives] could go if he can recover what has been lost. Truly he lost a lot. It would benefit the Crees to have things the way he sees fit and not have to go to the Whiteman every time to see what he thinks.

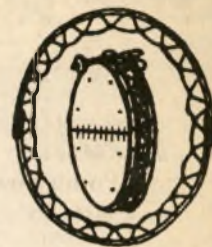


# GRAND COUNCIL ANNOUNCEMENTS



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## NEW YORK UTILITY TO DROP CONTRACT

At hearings in Albany, New York on March 2, the new President of the New York State Power Authority, Mr. David Freeman, announced that NYPA would cancel the 800-MW contract with Hydro-Quebec. He said that the electricity was too expensive and that it would contribute to the construction of future dams, with all of their impacts.

## ConEd BLAMES CREES FOR SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Eugene McGrath, president of the power utility Consolidated Edison, attempted to explain to the Cree leadership on March 10, 1994 the reason why his company was negotiating a new contract with Hydro-Quebec.

The Grand Council explained that the contracts drive the construction of mega-projects which have terrible environmental and social impacts on the Crees and Cree lands.

In reply, Mr. McGrath stated: "When we run out of electricity here in New York we will have riots and people will die."

This exaggerated "better you suffer than us" rhetoric is what is behind the social and environmental responsibility of ConEd.

There is presently three- and four-cent-per-kilowatt-hour electricity available in New York. This company charges its clients 15 cents for electricity.

By signing on with Hydro-Quebec, ConEd may forego cheaper alternatives and may be forced to reduce energy-conservation programs.

These programs create employment in New York, stated Bill Namagoose after the meeting. "We will hold Consolidated Edison responsible," he said.

## FORESTRY AND HYDRO IMPACTS EXPLAINED TO NEW YORK ACTIVISTS

In an activists' conference in Albany, New York on March 11, 12 and 13th, Cree leaders and community members explained the problems.

Chief Billy Diamond and a delegation from Waskaganish explained the urgent need to target the company of Norwick-Perron, which plans to clearcut the sacred mountain of Mukochee.

They explained how the Crees have been pushed aside by forestry operations which destroy the animal habitat. The delegation also set out the fact that Quebec violates its own laws on the Cree lands. It allows for less reforestation than is necessary and it has subverted the law to allow roads and camps to be built without environmental review.

"This is another example of environmental racism," explained Ambassador Ted Moses at the conference. "Quebec applies a double-standard where rape of the aboriginal lands is permitted while lands near to southern communities are protected," he continued.

"Cheap Quebec lumber and paper are only available to the American and European markets at the price of the devastation of our lands and way of life," stated Grand Chief Coon Come upon hearing of the conference's success.

Chief Matthew Mukash and delegates from Chisasibi and Whapmagoostui and Inuit delegates from Sanikiluaq explained their opposition to the proposed Great Whale River Project. The freshwater seals of Lake Bienville, the threat to the rare Harlequin duck, impacts on caribou and on the Crees and Inuit ways of life were all cited.

"This project is an unnecessary violation of the environment and of our way of life. We can defeat the project. We must stand together and fight it," stated Chief Matthew Mukash.

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# MURRAY PORTER: 1492 Who Found Who?

Murray Porter grew up and still lives on the Six Nations Reserve near Brantford, Ontario. 1492: *Who Found Who?* is his first album and all he asks for is a chance. "Have an open mind and have a listen. Then you make your own judgement on the music itself," he says.

I've listened to the music and enjoyed the energy of this hot new native artist. Murray's own song lyrics say it all: "See I'm a red man singing the black man's blues living in a white man's world."

Indeed, you can hear the influences of B. B. King, Ray Charles, Downchild Blues Band and the Guess Who when you turn this artist on. The music has a strong mainstream beat with lyrics that any native can feel and understand.

Murray Porter has touched a beat of the native heart with lyrics from songs like *Whiteman's Card*, a song that talks about the racial double-standard of the government's Indian card by asking, "Where's your whiteman's card?/prove to me you ain't black/Where's your whiteman's card?"

It seems Murray has been bothered by border guards, store clerks and the I.R.S., all asking him to prove his ancestry and getting upset when he questioned theirs.

I asked Murray about his choice of lyrics in a phone interview. He told me he didn't expect every song to go Top 40 and he had a few things to get off his chest. Also the record deal with EMI and First Nation's Music Publishing promised him free rein. He put it to the test.

What a test and what an album. If it's not available at your local outlet, demand that they get this album and sit back and enjoy. I fully expect that Murray Porter will be picking up a Juno next year. The first single is 1492 *Who Found Who?*

Murray's getting ready to tour the album's hotspots, so catch him while you can. A few people in Whapmagoostui might remember as he played there last November. While Murray was prepared for the cold, most of his band wasn't, but from reports they were and still are hot when they hit the stage.

—William Nicholls

To book Murray Porter call First Nation's Music Publishing at 1-416-291-7651. The album itself is available from EMI Records.



## THERE IS NO MIDDLE GROUND

BY ART SOLOMON

There are many good people who have seen the way things are.  
And have asked in despair almost.  
But what can I do?

And the only answer has been.

YOU have to do something about YOU.

Only you can decide whether you will be a part of

This destruction or whether you will set your Heart and mind against it.

You may not be able to change where you work or how you earn your living.

But you are totally responsible for the direction that

You give your own life.

We are only visitors here in this part of Creation.

We are guests of the one who owns this Creation.

We are always to keep in mind that we

Can own nothing here, not even our own lives.

So the purpose of life then is

Not to acquire possessions

But to honour the Creator by how we live.

If we choose to be on the side of that great Positive Power

We have no choice but to set our hearts and minds

Against the destruction around us.

But thought without action is useless.

We must be on one side or the other

And how we will involve ourselves must be the free choice

Of everyone.

If we choose to act, we must act intelligently

And with common sense.

It means we will do everything in our power to understand

The questions that we choose to involve ourselves with.

But whatever we are, we must be ACTION PEOPLE

Even if the only action possible is to pray.

Power is given to each of us by the Creator.

—from *Songs for the People: Teachings on the Natural Way*,  
poems and essays of Arthur Solomon, a Nishnawbe spiritual teacher, 1979



## ZIGZAGGING ON THE RUPERT'S

It was a clear sunny day without wind, the kind of day when the water acts like a mirror. You can see the world reflected in the water. You can see for miles and, with the heat, the distant islands seem to be floating in the simmering air.

Voices from the shore, where they are preparing to take us out, reach out and grab me. I smile at my mother and she smiles back. I'm one of the few and fortunate, it seems. My father couldn't make this trip so mom brought me along.

We flew into Loius Joillette from Mistissini the day before by Beaver, a standard type of bush plane for this area. It was quite an experience to see the southern part of Mistassini Lake from the air. I always knew my land was beautiful and special, but never had I seen so much of it at once.

It was almost a sensory overload as Mistissini was left behind, and with it all the trappings that "modern civilization" calls progress. There is a certain pride that you feel in knowing that here is what our ancestors knew and saved for us. No great monuments save the greatest one of all, the land itself untouched by our presence.

My mother had won a weekend at Louis Joliette after she bought a raffle ticket at some function. Louis Joliette is one of the fishing camps the Mistissini band runs complete with "native" guides, cabins, etc.

When I first knew I was going to fish the Rupert's River, I made plans to keep a very good eye on the routes that our guide, Stanley Mianscum, would be taking. My uncle said Stanley's father was one of the best and was probably booked for the next three years running by satisfied guests who would be returning to this camp. I would be getting a chance to see if his son measured up.

Though I kept an eye on where we were going, Stanley knew I might be back in the area. He did more zigs and zags than were necessary. Well, some of them were needed because of the rocks, but damned if I knew which ones. By the way, I didn't, so my soul is still safe for the moment.

Stanley was impressive when he would flip the boat around to allow us to fish the tops of the rapids. He controlled the outboard motor's speed to keep the boat in place. As I began casting, Stanley smiled, reached down and picked up his fishing rod. He now started casting into selected spots while controlling the motor's direction with his knees.

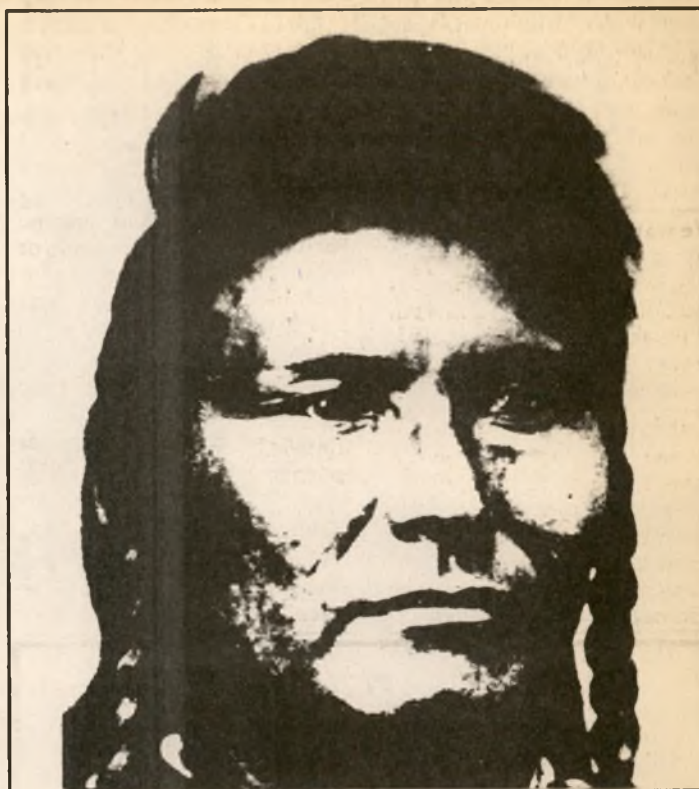
Mom caught the first fish of the day winning that standard fishermen's bet. I think everyone out in the far country bets on fishing successes even though it is illegal to gamble. Rumour has it even the Prime Minister has bet a couple of times on his casting abilities.

Another special moment of the trip was when a large speckled trout was rising out from behind the shadows of a large rock. I could see clearly and I carefully placed my hook in the right area. I began to draw him in feeling that tingle of adrenalin and excitement that everyone feels anticipating the strike. That was when Stanley showed me the superiority of a well-placed fly. That trout left my lure and showed his preference for the fly-fishing method. That day, Stanley made me shore lunch that had my mouth watering 15 seconds after the speckle hit the frying pan.

I still plan to get even with Stanley even after all these years. But first I'm going to get me a flyrod and learn how to use that contraption. Then I'll zigzag the Rupert's once again looking for my old friendly guide and his secret spots.

If you are interested in fishing the Rupert's River or Mistassini Lake, the best place to call is Mistassini Lake Outfitting Camps at 1-418-923-3361.

BY WILL NICHOLLS



### THE CHISASIBI POLARIS RACING TEAM

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# Chibougamau Rallye pics

Photos: la Sentinelle of Chibougamau



Amateur Winner: Walter Bosum



Starting line



Stanley Mianscum: Mistissini



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- **All Cree Communities (at the Schools)**  
*See Student Affairs Technicians or Guidance Counsellors*
- **Adult Education Centres in the Communities**  
*(Chisasibi, Mistissini, Waswanipi, Waskaganish, and Nemaska)*
- **Cree School Board Post Secondary Offices**  
*in Montreal (1-800-463-7402) and Hull (1-800-567-9667)*

*Send application, along with required documents, to:*

### **CREE SCHOOL BOARD**

**Attention: Jane L. Blacksmith**

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